

162nd Inf Bde's SFA Course trains trainers for future missions

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FORT POLK, La. — Training Security Forces Assistance Advisor Teams is a major part of the 162nd Infantry Brigade's mission, and producing new observer-coach/trainers, or OC/Ts, is critical to ensure success. The brigade prepared for an upcoming Security Force Assistance Course and Joint Readiness Training Center rotation with the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division Air Assault, by conducting OC/T training Sept. 16-20.

The SFA Course prepares advisor teams deploying to Afghanistan on methods to develop their Afghan counterparts when performing staff functions.

These advisor teams also focus on guiding Afghan commanders and senior enlisted Soldiers in decision-making, security operations and community policing. Once the teams complete the course, they put these skills to use in a field environment during a JRTC rotation.

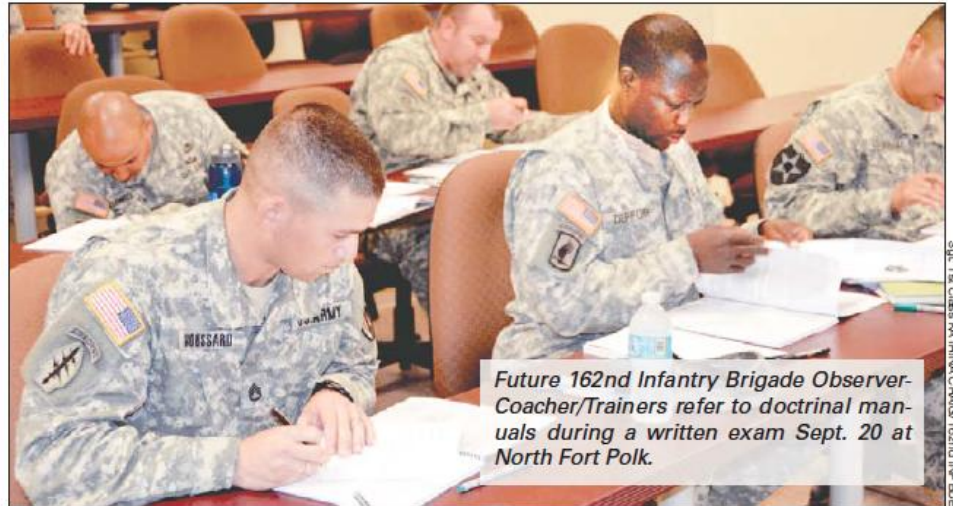
Master OC/T trainer Sgt. 1st Class Joshua McSpadden was the primary instructor for the training, which was conducted by the 5th Battalion, 353rd Infantry Regiment. McSpadden has been an OC/T for 12 SFA Courses, and five combat training center rotations at Fort Polk and Fort Irwin, Calif. His explanation of what makes a successful OC/T is simple: "OC/Ts are well versed in doctrine and procedures and can coach, train, observe and teach to improve a unit's performance," said McSpadden.

When teaching Soldiers how to become OC/Ts, McSpadden not only focuses on the duties and responsibilities of an OC/T, but also shows them how to use a mission training plan, or MTP, and a coach-advise-assist-train card, called a CAAT card, to measure a unit's performance and progress. He then teaches the Soldiers how to conduct an effective after action review.

The week's training ended with a written exam, where Soldiers had to use the MTP to answer multiple questions, forcing them to become

familiar with it and other doctrinal manuals.

"Once they finish this course, they'll have a better understanding of the job of an advisor, which helps them know what to look for when training others, but the true test will come when the new OC/Ts go through their first SFA Course and JRTC rotation to apply their newly gained skills," said McSpadden. "I am confident they have everything it takes to be successful in the mission. They have the training, now they must apply it."



Future 162nd Infantry Brigade Observer-Coacher/Trainers refer to doctrinal manuals during a written exam Sept. 20 at North Fort Polk.

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